

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend claims 1, 3, 4, 9, 11, and 14, add new claim 15, and cancel claim 2 without prejudice, as shown in the following listing of claims, which will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application. Claims 1-7, 9, 11, and 14 had previously been elected with traverse. Claims 8, 10, 12, and 13 were non-elected. In order to further prosecution in a timely manner, claim 2 has been cancelled without prejudice to their pursuit in an appropriate continuation or divisional application.

Listing of claims:

1 (currently amended). ~~A protein~~ An isolated protein which comprises the same or substantially the same amino acid sequence as the amino acid sequence represented by SEQ ID NO: 1, or a salt thereof.

2. (cancelled)

3 (currently amended). ~~A DNA~~ An isolated DNA which comprises a DNA encoding the protein according to claim 1.

4 (currently amended). ~~A DNA~~ An isolated DNA according to claim 3, which has the base sequence represented by SEQ ID NO: 2.

5 (original). A recombinant vector which comprises the DNA according to claim 3.

6 (original). A transformant transformed with the recombinant vector according to claim 5.

7 (original). A method of producing the protein or its salt according to claim 1, which comprises culturing the transformant according to claim 6 and producing and accumulating the protein according to claim 1.

8 (withdrawn). An antibody to the protein according to claim 1, the partial peptide according to claim 2, or a salt thereof.

9 (currently amended). A method of determining a ligand to the protein or its salt according to claim 1, which comprises using

- a. providing the protein according to claim 1 or its salt;
- b. providing a test substance;
- c. exposing the protein or its salt to the test substance;
- d. measuring either
 - i. the binding of the test substance to the protein or its salt; or
 - ii. the reactivity of the test substance to the protein or its salt or the partial peptide according to claim 2, or a salt thereof.

10 (withdrawn). A method of screening a compound or its salt that alters the binding property between a ligand and the protein or its salt according to claim 1, which comprises using the protein according to claim 1, the partial peptide according to claim 2, or a salt thereof.

11 (currently amended). A kit for screening a compound or its salt that alters the binding property between a ligand and the isolated protein or its salt according to claim 1, which comprises the isolated protein according to claim 1 ~~or the partial peptide according to claim 2, or a salt thereof.~~

12 (withdrawn). A compound or its salt that alters the binding property between a ligand and the protein or its salt according to claim 1, which is obtainable using the screening method according to claim 10 or the screening kit according to claim 11.

13 (withdrawn). A pharmaceutical composition which comprises a compound or its salt that alters the binding property between a ligand and the protein or its salt according to claim 1, which is obtainable using the screening method according to claim 10 or the screening kit according to claim 11.

14 (currently amended). ~~A DNA~~ An isolated DNA which hybridizes to the DNA according to claim 3 ~~under highly stringent conditions and hybridizes to the DNA according to claim 3 in a solution having a sodium concentration of no higher than 19mM at a temperature of at least 65°C.~~

15 (new). An isolated DNA which hybridizes to the DNA according to claim 3 and is either:

- a. at least 70% identical to the DNA according to claim 3; or
- b. at least 70% identical to the complementary strand of the DNA according to claim 3.